

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough consideration provided the present application. Claims 1-15 and 18-21 are now present in the application. Claims 1, 8, 13 and 20 have been amended. Claims 16 and 17 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 8, 13 and 20 are independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In particular, the Examiner alleged that the subject matter of claim 17 is confusing to the Examiner because claim 16 (depending from claim 13) recites that the neurons in the neural network have a single modality and claim 17 (depending from claim 13) recites that the neurons in the neural network have a plurality of modalities. However, claim 17 depends from independent claim 13, not from dependent claim 16. In other words, claims 16 and 17 respectively further limit the scope of independent claim 13 without any conflicts. In fact, the specification on page 6, lines 27-33 and on page 31, lines 12-17 clearly discloses that the neurons in the neural network may have a single modality or a plurality of modalities. Accordingly, original claim 17 (now incorporated in independent claims 1, 8, 13 and 20, as described hereinbelow) is definite and clear. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, are therefore respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 & 103

Claims 1-4, 6-9, 11-13, 15, 16 and 18-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mita, U.S. Patent No. 6,243,490. Claims 5, 10 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mita in view of Ayala, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2004/0143559. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Since original claim 17 is definite and clear, and the Examiner fails to raise any 102/103 rejection against original claim 17, it is believed that original claim 17 clearly defines over the teachings of the utilized references. By the present amendment, independent claims 1, 8, 13 and 20 have been amended to incorporate original dependent claim 17, which is believed to include allowable subject matter. Accordingly, it is believed that claims 1, 8, 13 and 20 and their dependent claims are in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Joe McKinney Muncy, Registration No. 32,334 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant respectfully petitions for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application and the required fee is attached herewith.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: November 9, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Joe McKinney Muncy

Registration No.: 32,334

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant